

Brazoria County
On-Site Wastewater Facilities Assistance

Project Description

Brazoria County shall provide assistance to low-income homeowners to replace their malfunctioning or failing onsite wastewater treatment systems in Brazoria County. An onsite wastewater treatment system is a system of treatment devices or disposal facilities that (1) is used for the disposal of domestic sewage, excluding liquid waste resulting from the processes used in industrial and commercial establishments; (2) is located on the site where the sewage is produced; and (3) produces not more than 5,000 gallons of waste a day. TEX. HEALTH & SAFETY CODE § 367.001(2) and 30 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 286.2(7). Low-income households fall at or below the 80 percent median income level for households in the county where they live.

Many of the onsite wastewater treatment systems currently in use in Brazoria County are substandard or in disrepair, resulting in the discharge of sewage into local neighborhoods, ditches, and waterways. These septic system failures coupled with proximity to the coast and numerous waterways increases the need to identify problem systems and replace or repair them to prevent further release of raw sewage into the environment.

Brazoria County shall identify property owners for potential replacement of their malfunctioning wastewater treatment system. Each candidate shall complete an application, including standard income documentation, to determine their eligibility. Brazoria County shall review applications for eligibility for assistance at Brazoria County's expense. After a candidate's low-income income status is verified, Brazoria County shall seek bids from local onsite wastewater treatment system installers to design and install an appropriate onsite wastewater treatment system for the particular property and soil conditions. Brazoria County shall determine which kind of system is appropriate for installation at each qualified site based on factors including the size of the property and the soil composition. Brazoria County shall also determine whether a system should be repaired rather than replaced.

Brazoria County shall select a qualified bidder for the installation. The installer shall submit an application including all standard wastewater treatment system installation requirements that shall be reviewed by Brazoria County. Upon approval of the application, the system shall be installed by the selected contract company. After the system installation is completed by the contract company and approved by Brazoria County, payment shall be made by Brazoria County to the selected company using SEP Funds.

Brazoria County shall ensure that all repairs, replacements, and installations are performed in compliance with local, state, and federal rules relating to onsite wastewater treatment systems. Brazoria County shall ensure that only properly licensed contractors are utilized for repair of existing onsite wastewater treatment systems and installation of new onsite wastewater treatment systems.

Eligible Sites

Eligible sites will be limited to those where the household qualifies as low-income as defined by TEX. GOV'T CODE § 2306.004(15). Sites that are under enforcement for violation of TCEQ rules are not eligible for assistance under this SEP.

Environmental Benefit

This SEP will provide a benefit to the environment by preventing the release of sewage into the environment and by protecting human health. Raw sewage can carry bacteria, viruses, protozoa (parasitic organisms), helminthes (intestinal worms), and bioaerosols (inhalable molds and fungi). People can be exposed through sewage in drinking water sources, direct contact from water in lawns or streets, and inhalation and skin absorption.

Sewage overflows also cause damage to the environment. Sewage overflows may reach rivers, lakes, streams, or aquifer systems. In addition to potential spread of disease, sewage in the environment contributes excess nutrients, metals, and toxic pollutants that contaminate water quality, cause algae blooms, and kill fish and other organisms in aquatic habitats.

Each failing septic system that is replaced will improve the water quality in waterways and watersheds by removing raw sewage and high levels of bacteria, viruses, and protozoa. Removal of sewage as a point source of pollution will also protect ground, surface, and drinking water from contamination. This Project has the potential to not only improve the water quality in the Brazos River Basin, Christmas Bay, Galveston Bayou, Chocolate Bayou, Bastrop Bayou, and the San Bernard River Basin, but will also improve the public health for a sector of the population that is least able to afford health care. Diseases that result from sewage contaminated water range from mild gastroenteritis (causing stomach cramps and diarrhea) to life threatening ailments such as cholera, dysentery, infectious hepatitis, and severe gastroenteritis.

Eligible Areas and Counties

Archer, Austin, Bailey, Bastrop, Baylor, Borden, Bosque, Brazoria, Brazos, Brown, Burleson, Burnet, Callahan, Castro, Cochran, Colorado, Comanche, Coryell, Crosby, Dawson, Dickens, Eastland, Erath, Falls, Fayette, Fisher, Floyd, Fort Bend, Freestone, Galveston, Garza, Grimes, Hale, Hamilton, Haskell, Hill, Hockley, Hood, Jack, Johnson, Jones, Kent, King, Knox, Lamb, Lampasas, Lee, Leon, Limestone, Lubbock, Lynn, Madison, Matagorda, McLennan, Milam, Mills, Nolan, Palo Pinto, Parker, Parmer, Robertson, Scurry, Shackelford, Somervell, Stephens, Stonewall, Swisher, Taylor, Terry, Throckmorton, Travis, Waller, Washington, Wharton, Williamson, and Young Counties

Minimum Contribution Amount

\$500